

# Regional Council Activity Report

May 26, 2004



## Executive Director's Report

The May 26th Regional Council meeting marked the completion and approval of the budget and work program for the coming year (see action items below). Significant this year was the extensive discussion held on many MAG projects and a better understanding of the budget. I wish to thank all of the members of the Regional Council and staff for their time invested in shaping the budget and work program.

The May meeting also included the ratification by the Regional Council for MAG to join the Arizona State Retirement System. This is an important long term step for MAG in retaining its staff and will be a great asset in recruiting new MAG staff members.

At the meeting, we also heard from three elected officials who were departing from their elected official positions and service to this region. Their departing comments were a reminder that the personal relationships and trust that evolve from working together are the real glue that allows MAG to achieve the many delicate challenges facing this region. These relationships are built a step at a time, often at MAG meetings working on regional projects. Again, I wish to thank the Regional Council for approving the budget and for the many improvements you have made to the MAG organization.

**For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**



## Regional Council Meeting Report for May 26, 2004

### Regional Council Approves FY 2005 Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget

After completion of a new budget process developed to allow additional time for review, the MAG Regional Council approved the Draft FY 2005 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget. The MAG budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 is \$14,493,645, which represents a decrease of approximately 25.42 percent from last year's budget. It includes \$7,206,495 for operations and \$7,287,150 for consulting and pass-through agreements. In all, the new programs for FY 2005 total \$1,808,475.

**For more information, please contact Becky Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **MAG to Join the Arizona State Retirement System**

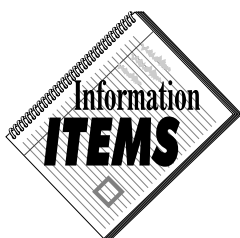
The Regional Council ratified an Executive Committee action to approve MAG joining the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS). The Executive Committee originally approved MAG applying for ASRS participation May 13, 2003, and the action was ratified by the Regional Council on May 28, 2003. However, ASRS questioned MAG's eligibility and a subsequent Attorney General's opinion was issued that MAG was not eligible to join the System. Since then, legislation allowing MAG and similar organizations to join the system was passed at the state legislature in the form of House Bill 2049. The legislation was signed by the Governor, allowing MAG's participation in the state's retirement system. In order to resubmit the application, new action was required by the Executive Committee and the MAG Regional Council. MAG employees are expected to be moved into the system sometime in the fall.

**For more information please contact Becky Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Regional Council Approves Amendments to Transportation Improvement Program**

The Regional Council voted to approve an amendment to the FY 2004-2007 MAG Transportation Improvement Program. The amendment includes the acceleration of the right-of-way acquisition phase of the Wickenburg Bypass project from 2005 to 2004, totaling \$2.8 million in National Highway System funds. The Council's approval also adds a new phase of the Maricopa County Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program, with a \$3.2 million grant to continue a program already in progress. Maricopa County is matching this award with the same amount in local funds. The amendment allows the projects to proceed on schedule. MAG conducted a conformity consultation on the amendment.

**For more information, please contact Paul Ward, MAG Transportation Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.**



## **Information Items**

### **Air Quality Update**

The Regional Council received an update on several air quality issues. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated the new nonattainment area for the eight-hour ozone standard. The new boundary includes mainly Maricopa County and now adds the area of Apache Junction. Although the Council had supported a Maricopa County-only boundary, the new boundary

should not create jurisdictional issues. EPA has designated the MAG region as a Basic Nonattainment Area because the readings are only slightly over the standard at two monitors.

An update was also provided on particulate pollution. As of 2003, the region has experienced violations of the annual standard at five locations. To achieve attainment, the region must be clean for three years before 2006. If the region continues to have violations after January 2004, the EPA will require the region to have a five percent plan in place, which means pollutants will have to be reduced by five percent each year until the standards are met. The Salt River monitor continues to exceed the standards. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is working on air quality control measures for the Salt River PM-10 State Implementation Plan Revision to reduce particulate pollution in the study area, which covers 59th Avenue to 10th Street, Baseline to Van Buren.

MAG continues its efforts to get PM-10 added to the SAFETEA formula. U.S. Congressman John Shadegg offered an amendment to include PM-10 in the formula on the House Floor, but it was withdrawn after two key Congressmen agreed to revisit the language in the Conference Committee. U.S. Senator Jon Kyl, the National Association for Regional Councils, and the Arizona Department of Transportation have also been assisting in this effort.

The Council also received an update on the lawsuit filed by the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest. On May 10, 2004, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit Court issued an opinion that vacated portions of EPA's final approval of the Serious Area Particulate Plan for PM-10 for Maricopa County. The court advised EPA that it must review its discussion of the rejection of CARB diesel. EPA attorneys are evaluating the impact of the court's opinion.

**For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**



## **Upcoming Events**

### **MAG Hosts Booths at Special Events**

MAG will host an informational booth at Metrocenter Mall on Saturday, June 12, from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. MAG staff will be on hand to provide shoppers and mall visitors with information on the Regional Transportation Plan and other MAG programs. ADOT and Valley Metro will also participate in the event.

On Saturday, June 19, MAG staff will join with the Valley's African American community to celebrate Juneteenth at a family festival sponsored by South

Chandler's Self Help, Inc. MAG staff will provide informational materials on the Regional Transportation Plan and other MAG programs. Chandler's Juneteenth Festival will be held at Zora Folley Park, 601 E. Frye Road in Chandler, from 4:30 p.m. until 10 p.m.

**For more information contact Jason Stephens, MAG Public Involvement Planner, at (602) 254-6300.**



### **Desert Peaks Awards to Honor Regional Excellence**

The Maricopa Association of Governments will honor seven partnerships and individuals during the Sixth Desert Peaks Awards Program June 23, 2004 at the Arizona Club. The reception begins at 5:30 p.m. and the awards ceremony at 6:15 p.m. The Arizona Club is located in the Bank One Building, 201 N. Central Avenue, Suite 3700.

This year's awards include a special "Summit Award" to honor those involved in the development of a new Regional Transportation Plan, the most significant transportation planning effort the region has undergone in 40 years. Awards will be distributed in six categories: Summit Award, Public Partnership, Public-Private Partnership, Professional Service, Regional Partnership and Regional Excellence. Recipients include:

#### **Summit Award:**

- Regional Transportation Plan

#### **Public Partnership:**

- City of Glendale Chemical Weapon Full-Scale Exercise

#### **Public-Private Partnership: *(Two recipients were selected in this category)***

- City of Glendale/Phoenix Coyotes/The Ellman Companies Development Project
- Employers Against Domestic Violence

#### **Professional Service:**

- Jeff Martin, Assistant Development Services Manager, City of Mesa

#### **Regional Partnership:**

- San Tan Mountains Regional Park Master Plan

#### **Regional Excellence:**

- The Honorable Gary Pierce (R-Mesa), Arizona House of Representatives

Costs of the event are being offset through sponsorships. Sponsors include The Arizona Republic; Associated General Contractors; Audio Visual Resources; Bank of America; Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Arizona; Cox Communications; DMB Associates; e group; Kimley-Horn & Associates; Mariscal, Weeks, McIntyre and Friedlander, P.A.; Pinnacle West Capital Corporation; and Salt River Project.

Recipients were selected by a panel of judges who represent diverse interests from throughout the Valley. The judging panel for the 2004 Desert Peaks Awards included Tom Ambrose, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs, Phoenix Suns; Anna Maria Chavez, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Governor's Office; Dr. Larry Christiansen, President, Mesa Community College; Dr. Lattie Coor, Chairman and CEO, Center for the Future of Arizona; James Creedon, Retired Brigadier General, Landry, Creedon and Associates; Sandra Hicks, Former Executive Director, Challenger Space Center; and Joel Nilsson, Editorial Board Member, The Arizona Republic.

**For more information contact Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Manager, 602-254-6300.**

### **Next Regional Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be the Annual Meeting scheduled for June 23, 2004 in the Bank One Building, 201 N. Central Avenue, Suite 3800, in Phoenix.

Agenda items are expected to include Election of Officers; Approval of a New Finding of Conformity for the Special FY 2004-2007 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Amended Regional Transportation Plan; Conformity Consultation; Amendment of the Special FY 2004-2007 MAG TIP and the Regional Transportation Plan for Light Rail Transit; Proposed Amendment and Administrative Adjustments to the FY 2004-2007 MAG TIP for Transit Projects; Amendment of the FY 2004-2007 MAG TIP for ADOT Highway Projects and a Maricopa County Design Concept Report and Environmental Assessment; Proposed New Federal Functional Classification for 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Lower Buckeye Road to 0.8 Miles South; Requested Changes to the FY 2004 MAG Regional Freeway Program; and the Federal Fiscal Year 2004 MAG Federal Funds Interim Closeout and Amendment/Adjustments to the FY 2004-2007 MAG TIP and FY 2004 and FY 2005 Unified Planning Work Programs and Annual Budgets.

**For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**